The RECONSTRUCTIONIST

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EDITORIALS

An Open Letter to the Actions Committee of The World Zionist Organization

SINCE the establishment of the State of Israel, world Jewry has been confronted with a burning problem, how to maintain the unity of the Jewish people. It is obvious that that unity cannot be a political one. The Jew in the diaspora will continue to owe an exclusive political allegiance to the country of his citizenship. Jewish world-unity must, then, be essentially spiritual and cultural. It is obvious that Israel, being the one country in which Judaism functions as the majority culture, must be the spiritual center, and that a two-way cultural traffic must be maintained between Eretz Yisrael and the diaspora.

But the maintenance of spiritual unity between Jews who have to live in the midst of other cultures and Jews who live in a state to which their own culture is native, and in which it prevails, confronts us with a new situation. The problem is rendered difficult because, in that respect, it is without precedent in modern times.

Most people today are familiar with only two types of unity for historic groups that cross national boundaries. One of these types is that represented by the unity of the *Volks-Deutsche* under the Nazi regime, in which German cultural ties were made to subserve the political interests of the German state. The other is that represented by the Catholic Church, which is based on doctrinal conformity and ecclesiastical hierarchy.

It is obvious that neither of these two forms of unity can be acceptable for world-Jewry. The former was explicitly repudiated by the Actions Committee's decision distinguishing between the functions of the World Zionist Organization and of the Jewish state. The latter would involve a return to the doctrinal and ritual uniformity of Rabbinical Judaism, and its rejection is implicit in the very participation of heterodox and non-conformist elements in the World Zionist Congress. The kind of spiritual unity required must be based on the idea of common cultural interests that transcend ideological differences. Jewish culture so conceived must include all that pertains to the knowledge of human life—science, philosophy, art and religion, insofar as these are utilized to help the Jewish people to self-realization.

But the success of endeavors to establish Jewish unity requires more than

a plausible ideological basis. It requires as well an appropriate symbol and instrument that shall make the idea manifest and give it concrete embodiment.

Such an embodiment of the interest of all Jewry in the common culture of the Jewish people and its progressive development can be found only in the Hebrew University and in no other institution. The University must henceforth be invested by the Jewish public with the supremely important role which events have thrust upon it, that of symbolizing and effecting the spiritual unification of *kelal Yisrael.* Otherwise it is questionable whether the State of Israel can really function as a "spiritual center" for the Jewry of the diaspora.

If the yearning of the Jewish people for some source of Jewish unity in Israel that can be acceptable to the great majority of Jews all over the world is not to be frustrated, the Hebrew University, as the institution best qualified for that role, must be given the authority to discharge it. The University must be granted the means for impressing on the public mind that it is the appropriate symbol and instrument of Jewish spiritual unification. Fortunately such a means is in the possession of the World Zionist Organization, which has the power to confer it on the University. We refer to the Shekel.

The Shekel was traditionally an expression of the participation of the individual in the spiritual endeavors of *kelal Yisrael.* When it ceased to be given for maintaining the Temple worship, it was given for maintaining the rabbinic academies on which, at that time, the spiritual unity of Israel depended. The very change in the function of the Shekel from an expression of allegiance to the political goal of Zionism to an expression of allegiance to its spiritual goal would be of tremendous symbolic significance. It would signalize the consummation of the first phase of the Zionist movement, the political phase, and the initiation of the second, the cultural phase. It would demonstrate the W.Z.O.'s awareness of the need to direct its efforts to spiritual rather than political goals, once the State is fully established and its economic foundation firmly laid. The change in the function of the Shekel will doubtless involve certain fiscal and organizational changes in the *modus operandi* of the W.Z.O., but these should be adopted. For their adoption is necessary to overcome the danger of spiritual disunity resulting from the cessation of the common effort on behalf of the political objectives of Zionism, and to give reality to the concept of the State of Israel as the spiritual center of world Jewry.

EDITORIAL BOARD

IT IS UP TO PRESIDENT TRUMAN

PEACE is visibly nearer for Israel. The extraordinary success of Israeli arms has brought that about. The Arab states will not long be able to withhold recognition from Israel. They will be compelled to negotiate terms of peace with the representatives of Israel or suffer further defeats and possibly internal revolution. This result was achieved not with the help of the United Nations, although the Arab attack on Israel was equally an attack on the United Nations' decision in favor of partition, but in spite of repeated efforts by United Nations agencies to hinder, if not to prevent, an Israeli victory. The UN was responsible for the embargo on arms and the restriction of immigration of persons of military age, both of which operated to the advantage of the Arabs. It

was responsible for the phony truce arrangements which always saved invading armies from defeat but imperilled the security of Jewish populations, civilian as well as military. It was responsible for the preposterous proposals of UN mediators, from the suggestion that Jerusalem be turned over to Abdullah and the Negev divided between Transjordania and Egypt, down to the latest outrageous demand that Israel withdraw from the positions in the Negev reconquered from the invading Egyptians.

As Jews we are proud of what Israel has achieved by itself in spite of unfair interference by the UN, but we are not happy that the achievement had to come about in this way. We had hoped that Israel's right to independence in its land would be vindicated in a manner that would enhance the moral prestige of the United Nations and contribute to the unity of mankind. For a brief moment it seemed that such would be the case. Russia and the United States, though at odds on most issues, were agreed on the question of Palestine. But the agreement was short-lived. To bring our policy into accord with Great Britain's, the United States soon reversed itself. Since then, the other nations in UN have looked in vain to us for leadership. Being unwilling to act decisively without United States support, they have acquiesced in dilatory measures which certainly did not contribute to Israel's victory but which were not efficacious in preventing it. The one effect of those measures has been to prolong the war and make it more costly in human lives and the fruits of human toil.

We are unhappy about the UN's failure to establish its moral authority, and, as Americans, we are ashamed of our country's responsibility for the UN fiasco. From the time that the State Department abdicated the right to an independent American policy in the Middle East in favor of British hegemony in that region, considerations of justice, decency and international good faith have been subordinated to considerations of expediency. Instead of putting American power behind the right, we have perverted right to serve the interests of power.

We cannot believe that President Truman is happy in the present situation. Not only in his recent campaign speeches, but in many of his previous acts, he has given evidence of good will toward Israel. He supported the immigration policy of the Anglo-American Committee, he backed the UNSCOP report and the partition resolution, and he was prompt in giving *de facto* recognition to Israel. If he yielded to a reversal of his policy, it must have been reluctantly and under great pressure from the British Foreign Office and from his own subordinates in the State Department who had a traditional pro-British orientation and deemed it necessary to save British prestige with the Arab world. During his first administration, he could not feel fully confident of himself and of many of his policies. He had not been elected to the office of President but had succeeded to it by the death of his predecessor. He had had little previous experience with foreign affairs and naturally placed great reliance on his advisors in the State Department.

But President Truman has just been reelected by a substantial majority. He knows now that the American people have placed confidence in him and want him to take the helm and steer his own course. They want him to develop a constructive American foreign policy based on the affirmation of principles of international cooperation for the good of all peoples of the world, not on the mere negation of Communism and Soviet ex-

pansion. He has announced his continued advocacy of Israel's right to statehood within the borders allotted to it by the UN Assembly's decision of November 29, 1947, and his opposition to any modification of those borders without Israel's consent. Now let him fulfil his pledge and the pledge of his party.

The time is propitious. The nations are again waiting for America, and more particularly for America's president, to take the lead. By repudiating the British stand and reverting to the traditional American pro-Zionist policy, by according Israel *de jure* recognition, by sponsoring its admission to UN, by granting it a loan to make possible mass-migration of Jews to Israel, by urging the Arab states to enter into direct negotiations with the Israeli government, and in other ways, President Truman can restore American prestige within the United Nations and can strengthen the moral authority of the United Nations with the peoples of the world. He has the opportunity of showing to the world that the United States, operating within and through the United Nations, is ready to stand back of all small and struggling democracies and to champion their freedom and security.

A CHALLENGE TO THE JEWISH BUSINESSMAN

WE are looking forward hopefully to a speedy and victorious end of the war for Israeli independence. The achievement of that goal, in face of the opposition that Israel encountered not only from its enemies but from neutral and even from ostensibly friendly nations, is little short of a miracle. But even should peace be declared tomorrow, the sort of peace that would satisfy all our demands, we would still be in need of as great a miracle to tide Israel over a crisis that impends, a crisis that few envisage because of preoccupation with the more melodramatic events of the armed conflict. Happily, Zionist leaders both in Israel and in America do envisage the crisis and are laying plans to avert it. But the success of those plans depends on us, the Jews of America.

The crisis we refer to is the danger of an economic debacle which can only be prevented if we, the Jews of America, demonstrate our faith in the economic capacity of the Yishuv and in the value to us of laying a firm economic foundation for the State of Israel.

These are the facts that we must bear in mind, the challenging facts. Some twenty to twenty-five thousand Jews are now entering Israel monthly, and the number is likely to increase rather than to diminish during the remaining months of the first year of Israel's independence. That will mean an increase of over 15 per cent in the Israeli population. Can you imagine what it will require to insure that all these immigrants find homes and jobs? It has been estimated that such an influx of immigrants into Israel would be the equivalent, considering the ratio of the Israeli to the United States population, of an influx into the United States of seventeen million immigrants.

Nor does that tell the whole story. Simultaneously with the problem of absorbing this new immigration, the State of Israel will be faced, as soon as peace is established, with a colossal task of reconversion. Demobilized soldiers will need to be housed and given jobs. War industries will have to be put on a peace time basis and this too will probably cause economic dislocations. What an anti-climax it would be if, after having fought so heroically against overwhelming odds

and having won at a cost of so many precious lives, the end of the war were to usher in a period, not of austerity—for that the Yishuv is prepared—but of want, destitution and misery!

But what can we do about it? Are we not already giving to the United Jewish Appeal as much as can reasonably be expected of us? And, even if we should give much more, would that suffice? It has been estimated that to settle one million Jewish immigrants in Israel in the course of ten years would require an outlay of two and a half billion dollars. How much more can American Jews give without jeopardizing their own economic security, without killing the goose that lays the golden eggs?

But it is no longer a question of giving. Rather is it a question of investing, of diverting a part of the funds which we would ordinarily invest in other profit-making enterprises to economic enterprises in Israel.

Israel has economic resources. The most important of these are its men and women. They have demonstrated their adaptability to new tasks in the way that, despite the lack of a Jewish military tradition and war industries, they were able to prosecute the present war. Indeed, they demonstrated it long before the war by their marvelous achievements in conquering deserts and swamps and building cities like Tel Aviv, where a few decades ago there was nothing. We Jews in America have been applauding their achievements. Perhaps we have even been envying them their share in the great creative enterprise which means so much to all Jewry and will, we are convinced, mean much to all mankind in the future. Now is our chance to do more than applaud. Now we have the opportunity and the obligation to share *personally* in the creative task. We must take the opportunity and discharge the obligation.

Some of us will give of their labor and skill, their technical efficiency and administrative know-how to work being done in Israel. Others will exercise their business acumen in investing their capital where it can do good for themselves and for their people at the same time. Whenever we invest either labor or capital in Israel we are developing not only the material resources but the spiritual resourcefulness of our people, and we are providing not merely for our own material enrichment but for our spiritual enrichment, for the satisfaction of having a personal stake in the great spiritual adventure of our people in modern times.

It is not our intention at this point to discuss concretely any of the specific proposals for personally and socially useful investment in Eretz Yisrael. At a recent Economic Conference in the Waldorf Astoria, the Zionist Organization, launched the Israel Corporation of America and took initial steps for raising capital for a vast housing project such as is most urgent in Israel today. The Palestine Economic Corporation offers other investment opportunities. We are not economic experts and cannot give advice as to how private capital can most economically and most advantageously be invested in Israeli projects. Let the investor make his own study of the situation. But we feel it our duty to call attention to the new direction of Zionism in this country, which demands not merely political activity and raising of funds on a philanthropic basis for the development of Israel, but a personal participation in the work of building, a form of participation that should have a special appeal to the businessmen of our people. Will they rise to the occasion? Will they show

that business too can be a creative art directed to important social and ethical ends? Will they extend the horizon of their business outlook beyond the sphere of mere personal interest to the larger sphere of nation-building?

We have faith in the Jewish businessman as we have in the Jewish people generally. Let them know the facts; let them see the needs and the opportunity for satisfying them, and we are confident that they will rise to the height of their responsibilities.

DENAZIFICATION OR RENAZIFICATION?

DISQUIETING results are being received from Germany concerning the resurgence of anti-Semitism in that country. In Bavaria, particularly, according to an eye-witness account which appeared in *The New Statesman and Nation* (distributed here by the Information Department of the American Jewish Congress), anti-Semitism is spreading to all classes. This is the conclusion to be drawn from the widespread backing accorded to the *Bayernpartei,* a political party whose aim it is to oust "Communists, Prussians, Displaced Persons, Jews, Americans." The rising tide of anti-Semitism, asserts the correspondent, is accompanied by the renazification of Germany.

The American Military Government has been steadily easing up on the denazification program, with the courts freeing over 90 per cent of those suspected of having been Nazis or of having supported the Nazis or having exploited the conditions created by them. The commutation of sentences, notably that of Ilse Koch, has been publicized prominently in the American press. To cap the climax, many Nazis (usually and mistakenly spoken of as "*former* Nazis") have been placed in government positions. In Bavarian courts, the AMG reported in July, 1948, sixty percent of the judges and 75 percent of the public prosecutors were "former" Nazis. What started out as a slow, steady process of denazification has thus become a precipitous descent toward renazification.

It was known in advance that the re-education of Nazi Germany would take many years, perhaps a generation. Realists have more than once asserted that Germany would have to be policed for decades to come. But few indeed were those who could have predicted the return of Nazis to power under the noses of the American occupation authorities, three short years after the war. Jews were well aware of the malignant anti-Semitism that Hitler had implanted in German hearts, but even they expected confidently that an American military government would see to it that Nazis were excluded from positions of power. To what, then, are we to attribute this mishandling of a difficult, but far from insoluble problem?

That there has been incompetence and that, in many cases, our representatives have displayed naivete in accepting Nazi protestations of innocence are undoubtedly true. But they are only partial explanations. Similarly, while some American officials might be guilty of anti-Semitic leanings, it is inconceivable that official American policy would deliberately be directed toward setting up an anti-Semitic regime. The real clue to the renazification of Germany is to be found in the "get tough with Russia" policy.

The world has become increasingly aware of timing as a factor in war and international strategy. It is asserted that Russia signed her pact with the Nazis in 1939 to gain time. Hitler was a master

of timing. The opening of the second front was a matter of months of painstaking search for the right moment. And now, the East and West are racing against time. The West is apparently accelerating its program for rebuilding Germany in order to create, before it is too late, the buffer state it feels is necessary against an expansionist Russia. When one is thus pressed for time—whether the pressure be real or imaginary—one is likely to act hurriedly and ill-advisedly. Denazification would be a long and arduous task, but meanwhile a strong Germany, with an economic and military potential, must be established as a future source of Western power. Thus, the Germans are permitted greater and greater leeway for reconstructing their political and economic life in their traditional undemocratic spirit. The Nazis have found this much to their liking. This, at least, is how the Germans themselves interpret American policy—and for once, they seem to be right. In the article cited above from *The New Statesman and Nation,* the correspondent states, "American policy in Germany, which is mainly concerned with handing over all controls to the Germans as rapidly as possible, strengthens the feeling among Germans that they were right, and that the Western Powers fought the wrong war. There is a grim 'I told you so' tone in the voice of many Germans when conversing with Americans. Hitler was right — Communism is spreading across the world; Hitler was right—Russia is not capable of living in peace with her neighbors—." Therefore, the Germans imply, the West had better mend its fences by rebuilding a strong Germany, even if that means a government which includes a large number of Nazi sympathizers.

It is unfortunate that the Western democracies have not yet learned that the strongest bulwark against Communism is democracy itself. Supporting tyrannous, intolerant, undemocratic regimes, or permitting them to be set up by default, however justified each may seem from the standpoint of grand strategy and timing, is self-defeating. For *Realpolitik* is an uncertain affair. Those who engage in it can never be certain that it will not boomerang against them. It happened to Chamberlain; it can happen to us. Our renazified puppet could very well be manipulated by Russia. The Soviet diplomats are no less astute than ours in pulling the right strings.

Anti-Semitism is only one by-product of American policy in Germany. That alone would warrant a firm protest against the American Military Government's actions. But our government must also be charged with resurrecting a monster that will surely drive masses of Europeans into the arms of the Russians. Europe's millions who suffered under the Nazis must not be disillusioned by their rescuers. The American people, even while it resists the Russians in Berlin, must demand that its government apply the same degree of resistance to Nazism in the American Zone.

REALITIES AND VALUES

The Rabbinical Council of America has announced that steps have been taken for recognizing the Chief Rabbinate of Israel as *the supreme religious authority for all Jews.*

Who delegated to the Rabbinical Council of America the authority to speak for all American Jewry?

And what precedent is there for elevating the rabbinate of Israel to a position of authority over the rabbinate of the diaspora? The Babylonian Amoraim never regarded their authority as inferior

to that of the Palestinian except in respect to the calendar.

To find a precedent for insisting on association with a particular city or state as conferring religious authority one must look beyond Judaism. The Catholic Church recognizes the supremacy of the bishop of Rome over all other bishops.

Not so the synagogue; the extensive authority exercised by great *rabbanim* and *gaonim* always rested on the prestige which they won by their knowledge of Torah and their wisdom in its interpretation, whether they lived in Eretz Yisrael or in the diaspora. It is too late in history to establish a Jewish version of the papacy.

▼

DR. LEO BAECK, PRESIDENT OF the World Union for Progressive Judaism, is planning to take up permanent residence in the United States. He has come to this country at the invitation of the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, where he will lecture as a visiting professor.

In declaring his intention to become, in due course, a citizen of the United States, Dr. Baeck said: "America is the center of Jewish life and studies. The center has shifted from Europe. There are now two centers, Palestine and the United States, and the currents are strong between them."

We are happy to join in welcoming Dr. Baeck to this country. And we pray that, after having suffered the torments of Nazi persecution in Germany, he may, in America—to paraphrase the words of the Psalmist—rejoice according to the years that he was afflicted, the years in which he saw evil.

▼

WE COMMEND THE MINNESOTA Rabbinical Association for issuing the following statement:

"Marriage is a sacred covenant, hallowed by traditional prayers, which bind two people unto each other before God and man. Only the sanctuary of the home or the sanctuary of the synagogue is an appropriate setting for so sacred a service.

"We, the rabbis of the Twin Cities, after due consideration, in accord with the spirit of our tradition, and to maintain the dignity of the Jew in our community, have resolved and do hereby declare that, after March 1, 1949, we shall not officiate at weddings held outside the synagogue or home."

Sixteen rabbis of Minneapolis and St. Paul have joined in this decision. It required courage to take the step they did, and they are entitled to praise for combating the vulgarization and profanation of religious ceremonies, which occurs almost inevitably when these are commercially exploited by owners of hotels, restaurants, dance halls and club rooms.

▼

ISRAEL B. RAPPAPORT, DIRECTor of the Research Institute in American Jewish Education, which is sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, has recently returned from a three months' visit to Europe, where he helped to reorganize Jewish education on a communal basis. The body that has been set up in Europe to deal with the problem is known as the United Jewish Educational and Cultural Organization (UJECO) and was established in 1946 by the American Joint Distribution Committee. The plan is for UJECO eventually to assume full responsibility and for the JDC to turn over to it all its educational functions in Europe.

If that plan is realized, what was started in response to an emergency situation will have developed into a permanent communal body of primary importance to furthering Jewish spiritual life in that part of the world.

When Will American Judaism Be Born?*

By MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

A SERIOUS discussion of "The Aims of American-Jewish Life," at a conference of rabbis, educators and social workers, is a phenomenon that calls for the traditional benediction in which we thank God that He has enabled us to live to see the day.

Such a discussion implies that American Jewry has conceived a new idea, the idea of an American Judaism. Like a baby in gestation, such an idea is not exactly photogenic.

But to those who share the maternal instinct of American Jewry that idea is extremely important, even if not picturesque.

* * *

All this may be surprising to most of us who assume that American Judaism was born long ago, when the first Jewish immigrants became Americanized, or who subscribe to the doctrine of Isaac M. Wise that it was born with the publication of his prayer book known as *Minhag America.*

That is an illusion. American Judaism is still in the process of being born.

It will be born when American Jews have learned the true meaning of Judaism, and are willing to create the conditions necessary to its survival, health and growth in America.

A primary condition is the one that Judaism flourish in Eretz Yisrael and throughout the world, wherever Jews are given the opportunity to live in freedom.

What Is American Judaism?

American Judaism is neither the American Jewish Committee, nor the Jewish Congress, nor the Anti-Defamation League, though their activities are indispensable to its existence.

It is not Jewish hospitals, orphan asylums, homes for the aged, nursing and case work, though their elimination would produce a dangerous vacuum in Jewish life.

It is not relief, rescue and rehabilitation abroad, though it would be an inhuman and heartless kind of Judaism without them.

It is not the energy and resources poured into the upbuilding of the state of Israel, though the failure to expend them would impoverish it.

It is not the network of Jewish communal centers, though for lack of them it would never have contact with a considerable section of our Jewish youth.

It is not even the synagogue, though it is unthinkable without the synagogue.

What then is the Judaism of American Jews?

* * *

It is the psychological unity of the Jewish people, transposed into the key of religion. It is the "we-feeling," the sense which Jews have of mutual belongingness.

We-feeling results from living together and acting in common in the furtherance of shared interests.

A people is a group of human beings whose ancestors once lived together, and who thus developed a we-feeling which is transmitted from one generation to the next.

The more occasions the members of a people have to act in common, in meeting some common danger, in rejoicing upon having overcome it, or in sorrowing

* Address delivered at the Annual Conference of the Western States Section of the National Jewish Welfare Board, Nov. 13, 1948.

over having succumbed to it in large measure, the more intense is their we-feeling.

In short the more of a common history a people has, the more of a we-feeling it has.

The same is true of the future. The more expectations and hopes a people cherishes, the more do its men and women experience psychic unity or we-feeling.

* * *

That brings us back to an old definition of a people as a society which has a common past and looks forward to a shared future.

Let that same people have poets, prophets, lawgivers and sages. Let these men of the spirit interpret all the occasions of the people's victory and defeat, rejoicing and sorrow, achievement and frustration, from the standpoint of life's meaning as a whole and of man's destiny in particular.

Let them voice their thoughts and yearnings, their fears and warnings, that haunt them and give them no rest.

Before you know it they have created a religion for that people to live by.

For what is religion?

Religion is the morale or courage to strive to be fully human, or to achieve human destiny, in the face of temptation, suffering and disillusionment.

That renders the question whether the center movement is secular entirely irrelevant and out of focus. If *secular* means *worldly* and *religious* means *spiritual*, there is as much that is worldly in the synagogue as there is that is spiritual in the center.

The Analogy with Christianity

Let us pause a moment and ask ourselves what, in the light of that conception of Judaism, is Christianity?

A good part of the stiffening of our will to retain our Jewish individuality comes as an answer to Christianity's charge that we are a people that have forfeited our salvation.

A good part of the very *raison d'être* of Christianity consists of preoccupation with our history, our prophets and our fate.

Hence it is only proper that our Christian neighbors know what Christianity looks like to us.

That is necessary as a prerequisite for genuine good-will relations between Jew and Christian, of the kind that are based neither on tolerance nor on condescension, but on respect for each other's sincerity and on the acceptance of the equal right of all religions to live so long as they let live.

* * *

Christianity is to us Jews the psychological unity of Christendom, transposed into the key of religion, that of the Christian religion.

Christianity is the we-feeling among all Christians. Christ is the symbol of that we-feeling.

The Catholics have additional grounds for we-feeling through the doctrine and discipline of their church as sacrosanct.

The Protestants, as demonstrated in the recently organized World Assembly of Churches at Amsterdam, are straining hard to create a sense of organic unity. In the meantime they live on the momentum of the ancient unity of the church.

Both Catholics and Protestants are contributing to the we-feeling of Jews by constantly reminding the Jews of their ancestral sins and their stubborn rebelliousness against God.

Prerequisites for the Birth of American Judaism

American Judaism will be born when American Jews who are engaged in a professional or lay capacity in the furtherance of some Jewish purpose come to ask themselves how that very purpose

can further the psychological unity of the Jewish people, or how it can foster in the consciousness of the Jew that we-feeling which means for Jews to accept—to want and to welcome—one another.

That we-feeling will give birth to *American* Judaism, when it is combined with the we-feeling for all members of the American people, when it is synthesized with the acceptance of American history, American heroes, American culture and American ideals.

* * *

Such acceptance must constitute a permanent marriage of spirit with spirit and not a mere concordat of expediency.

But before that can happen, the Jew will have to learn to accept himself as a Jew.

So long as Jews hate themselves, or so long as the Jew in them only activates the inborn death-wish in them, Jews cannot live or act in the spirit of genuine brotherhood.

What they do then for their fellow-Jews is prompted by fear of anti-Semitism and not by love of their fellow-Jews.

This is not a wholesome state of mind, nor is it conducive to permanent or creative good. That will never enable American Judaism to be born.

* * *

When, therefore, the heads and functionaries of Jewish societies, institutions and organizations come together to achieve mutual cooperation and integration, it is a mistake to place the main emphasis upon good will and administrative planning.

Such emphasis implies the wrong assumption that the problem of getting those bodies to cooperate is fundamentally a problem of how to overcome the competitive spirit of vested interests. The competitive and non-cooperative tendency is greater among synagogues themselves than between synagogues and centers.

Even if some administrative genius manages to find a compromise solution, the heart of the problem remains untouched.

Whatever cooperation is then achieved is merely mechanical, and is likely to fall apart at the least upset.

That is why the very elaborate and well-meant discussions that have been carried on thus far by representatives of the synagogue, the center and the school cannot be said to have arrived at a real working plan for cooperative effort.

* * *

Speaking of "The American Crisis in Values" and its bearing upon the community's organization of leisure time services, Roy Sorenson, Managing Director of Y.M.C.A. of San Francisco, utters the following sentiments which Jewish leaders and workers in Jewish institutions cannot afford to disregard:

"Mechanization and automatism," he says, "have been going on a long time in our culture. It is not strange that they have conditioned much of the thinking about community organization.

"The assembly-line mind wants a standard product. The materialist, not concerned with moral and spiritual values, will settle for the lowest common denominator. Recreational activities — sports, music, drama, crafts—readily appear to be common denominators, if social and religious purposes are not figured in. Group work, too, has suffered from automatism. The processes have come to be relied upon alone, without clarity of ends."

I should rather say, "without some all-embracing end or purpose." For it is possible to be perfectly clear about limited and immediate ends, without accepting any all-inclusive ultimate goal.

In Jewish effort, as in all other social

and spiritual effort, there must be some over-all purpose to infuse psychological unity within the diversity of the objectives undertaken.

The Fundamental Issue

The fundamental issue with which we are confronted is this: Can institutions which are organized by Jews to serve Jews, whether for social service, relief, rehabilitation, Zionism, religion or culture, carry on their activities in a spirit of neutrality toward the future of Jewish collective life in America, or without deliberate regard for that psychological unity which is experienced as a permanent we-feeling with all Jews throughout the world?

To that question our answer should be a categorical "No."

* * *

The very spirit in which we Jews conduct our activities, even though those activities do not seem to impinge on the problem of psychological Jewish unity, inevitably affects that unity either favorably or adversely. If they do not reinforce and integrate it, they weaken and undermine it.

That is true of the so-called secular or temporal causes in Jewish life, like the campaigns against anti-Semitism and the appeals for relief and welfare funds.

The campaign against anti-Semitism is as often a campaign for freedom to be *goyim* as for freedom to be Jews. When that is its underlying motive, it is bound to have a disintegrative effect on Jewish life. For it accentuates the burden and liability of Jewish life, and underplays its value as a spiritual asset and opportunity for personal development.

It is, no doubt, true that Jewish hospitals have to be built. Jewish physicians cannot get along without the opportunity to interne and to augment their theoretic studies with guided practice. Jewish physicians have to be afforded the facilities to carry on medical practice on a highly scientific level.

But so long as Jewish hospitals are spiritually and Jewishly sterile, they exercise a devitalizing influence on the psychological unity of the very Jews that either support them or benefit from them.

The Jewish case-worker, who has to budget the needs of a poor family, cannot be neutral in her recommendations which determine the religious and cultural habits of that family.

And so down the line of social service and other types of public institutions.

* * *

One might think that we might omit the mention of such institutions as in their very function seem to be committed to a Jewish future. They certainly should not have to be reminded that they cannot afford to be neutral to the psychological unity of the Jewish people as a permanent element in the consciousness of the American Jew.

Apparently, however, there was very much doubt on how the Jewish center stood on that question.

Otherwise, what need would there have been for the Jewish Welfare Board to go to all that trouble of conducting a very elaborate survey under the supervision of a hand-picked national commission, and the directorship of Dr. Janowsky? Apparently, even the representatives of the centers and the authorities of the Jewish Welfare Board were very much in the dark about the attitude of the centers.

Furthermore, in his report, Dr. Janowsky is far from giving the centers a clean bill of health.

And what is even more strange is that, even after his recommendations were approved by the majority of the responsible leaders, a number of academically and

professionally prominent Jews sought to sabotage those recommendations.

Evidently some lay and professional leaders still act or feel about the Janowsky recommendations the way our ancestors felt when God was about to give them the Torah.

God, according to the legend, raised Mount Sinai over their heads and threatened them that, if they refused to accept His Torah, He would let the mountain fall on top of them.

There is still very much work to be done with the center leaders to convince them that a Jewish center is a paradox and a nuisance, unless it helps Jews to accept their unity as a source of good for themselves and their neighbors.

The inspired address of the late Dr. Liebman on the subject of the Jewish Community Center should become the credo of every center leader or worker. If he objects to it let him do so conscientiously enough to keep his hands off that institution.

* * *

Even Zionist organizations and cultural and religious institutions have to be reminded that they cannot afford to be silent on the question of the psychological unity of the Jewish people throughout the world.

Many fervent Zionists, to justify their fervor, negate the future of Jewish life in the diaspora, even under the most favorable political conditions.

They maintain that so long as Jews outside Eretz Yisrael are not in a position to determine all the conditions under which they live, they are bound to be absorbed by the majority population.

That attitude dooms the evolution of an American Judaism.

The synagogue and the school, too, may go so far in their emphasis on religion as to forget that without the Jews there can be no Judaism, and without a two-way passage for cultural and spiritual commmunication between Israel and American Jewry, American-Jewish life is certain to shrivel up.

There is indeed, hardly any American Jewish cause or institution that does not have to be reminded that unless it deepen and enrich the psychological unity or we-feeling of Jews, it adds to their inner conflict and spiritual misery. It cannot be neutral.

Where the Beginning Must be Made

American Judaism cannot be said to be a failure, for the simple reason that it cannot be said to have been tried.

That it was not tried by the charitable and defensive organizations is generally recognized. Their leaders point to that fact as constituting a special claim for general support.

What is by far more amazing is that American Judaism has not been tried by our religious, cultural and social institutions, by the very institutions which are supposed to have done nothing else than establish it in this land.

* * *

The main reason those institutions have failed to give American Judaism a trial is some form of misunderstanding of the meaning of Judaism.

They have all assumed Judaism to be merely a system of theological beliefs and ritual practices instead of the religious civilization of the Jewish people.

The school and the synagogue have made of that assumption a reason for breaking Judaism up into sectarian and denominational faiths.

The center has used that assumption and what the school and synagogue have made of it as an excuse for being neutral to Judaism.

The Federations, Welfare Funds and fraternal organizations have used the

fragmentation of American Jewry into sects and denominations as an excuse for having nothing to do with religion, thereby eliminating from Jewish life the main motive that can give it permanence outside Eretz Yisrael.

* * *

If order is to emerge out of the chaos which prevails in the inner life of American Jewry, a beginning should be made with the synagogue, the school and the center.

Those institutions are intrinsically the vehicles of the self-consciousness and conscience of our collective life as Jews.

They are to the relief, rehabilitation and defense funds and organizations what vital organs of the body, like the heart and the brain, are to the rest of the body.

They should be the first to learn the true meaning of Judaism as the psychological unity or we-feeling of the Jewish people, and to realize the need of integrating that Jewish we-feeling with the we-feeling which we share as Americans with the rest of the American people.

That should be the goal in all the negotiations among these institutions to achieve a *modus vivendi,* in all their attempts at cooperation.

With that end clearly in mind, the experiments that have been undertaken thus far, such as those in Buffalo and elsewhere, which are reported in the *J.W.B. Circle,* begin to take on a far deeper significance and hold out greater promise of permanent achievement than they could have merely as means of avoiding overlapping and duplication, or even of affording mutual assistance.

Creating the Voluntarist Community

Only after the synagogue, the school and the center have succeeded in merging their respective functions for the purpose of cultivating the we-feeling with all Jews throughout the world, will they hasten the parturition of American Judaism.

Only then will they be in a position to translate the Jewish we-feeling, into religion, into morale or courage to strive to be fully human, or to achieve human destiny, in the face of temptation, suffering and disillusionment.

Only then will they be able to elicit an affirmative attitude toward Judaism on the part of the Jewish organizations or institutions.

* * *

At present those organizations and institutions boast of their keeping aloof from anything that might involve them in religious controversy.

This policy of theirs is in effect a Jewish replica of the separation of Church and State.

In American democracy, that separation has eliminated many of the physical and mental cruelties that were associated with the traditional unity of Church and State.

But in actual life, the policy of separating Church from State has been enacted in the usual clumsy fashion described in the phrase of "throwing the baby out with the bath."

In the case of other peoples, there are many compensatory factors that prevent that policy from being fatal to their collective life.

In the case of us Jews, however, the application of the policy of drawing a sharp line between the institutions that are dedicated to religion and those that are dedicated to welfare has had a mentally and morally disintegrating effect. It has robbed the Jew of the will to live as a Jew.

* * *

The only way to cure a debilitated will to live is not to resort to reasoned argu-

ment, but to create conditions which of themselves make life worthwhile.

If we are to have the will to live as Jews, the desire to rejoice in the sharing of feeling and experience with other Jews, we need to have an address where we can find one another.

For the Jews of Eretz Yisrael the State of Israel is such an address.

A similar address has to be achieved for us American Jews.

That is possible only through the establishment of organic community.

* * *

An organic community is one which is held together by a sense of mutual responsibility on the part of all who belong to it.

Jews continued to live in organic community in the European countries, even after they were freed from their medieval disabilities.

But they did so for the most part, because the State expected Jews, as it expected all its citizens, to adhere to some authoritative religious communion.

Our fate as American Jews depends upon our ability to maintain our organic unity voluntarily, just as we had to maintain it in the past at the behest of non-Jewish governments.

* * *

To bring about an American Jewish type of community, based on voluntarism, as a vehicle of American Judaism, the one institution which will have to undergo a radical administrative transformation is the synagogue.

That means, in the first place, that the synagogue will have to surrender part of its sovereignty to the community.

Secondly, that the rabbis shall be in the service of the community in the same way as the educators who head the bureaus of Jewish education, the executives of federations and welfare funds, or the directors of the community centers.

* * *

That is not as revolutionary as it sounds. On the contrary, it means a return to a communal status which the rabbi has occupied throughout the centuries.

This change in the relationship between the synagogue, the rabbi and the community does not have to wait until the organic Jewish community has come fully into being and has come to include the various philanthropies, public relations and social service agencies.

A beginning should be made with a complete amalgamation of the three agencies that are the most vital organs of Jewish life—the synagogue, the school and the community centers.

The school whereof we speak is by no means to be confined to elementary Jewish education.

All types of institutions engaged in educational and cultural activity including the schools of higher learning would have to be integrated into a system for the maintenance and development of which the community would be responsible. The campaigns and distribution of funds to be used by the synagogues, schools and centers should be pooled, as they are by federations, welfare funds, and the United Jewish Appeal.

Affiliation with the community would have to be placed within reach of every Jew, and raised to an expectation to which the average Jew would want to live up.

* * *

This metamorphosis in American Jewry is inherently far less radical than the metamorphosis that had to take place in the attitudes and habits of world Jewry to make the State of Israel possible.

Zionism was at first combated by the synagogue, whether Reform, Consevative or Orthodox.

It was fought bitterly by the secularists like the Bundist socialists.

We must, therefore, expect also that

the proposed amalgamation will be fought by the individual institutions and organizations concerned.

The synagogue will refuse to surrender its sovereignty. The other organizations will resist either the acceptance of Jewish peoplehood or the revival of Jewish religion as the key-note of their activities.

But the laws of human nature and society together with the undying Jewish will to live will overcome their resistance.

Unless our lay and professional leaders unlearn their agency- and institution-mindedness and learn to become community-minded and to translate community-mindedness into community organization, they are writing the death warrant of American Judaism.

Who Shall Take the Initiative?

Where shall the beginning be made toward organic Jewish community?

Which of the three bodies, the synagogue, the school and the community center shall initiate the movement that is to culminate in the birth of an American Judaism?

Logically, it should be the synagogue, for the synagogue is the institution that represents the self-consciousness of the Jewish people.

Psychologically, however, that is at present impossible, because the synagogue is divided in its own mind, and its influence is at present divisive. In time it may regain the spiritual hegemony that normally belongs to it.

* * *

What happened every time the American Government was forced by the exigencies of war to deal with the Jews as a body?

It turned to the Jewish Welfare Board as the organization best qualified to represent American Jewry for the purpose of meeting the social and spiritual needs of Jews in the armed forces.

The Jewish Welfare Board, which proved to be the natural channel for mediating the social and spiritual needs of Jews *vis-á-vis* the general community in time of war, is also the natural channel for mediating those needs in times of peace.

It has demonstrated its capacity for the task of inaugurating Jewish communal unity in this country, by the vision it displayed in the recent survey it conducted, and the statesmanship which it exercises in the evaluation of that survey and the implementation of its democratically accepted conclusions.

In raising funds, we Jews have shown remarkable talent.

In raising the standard of collective action in matters of the spirit we have so far been quite inept.

Our social and spiritual efforts on a collective scale have so far been limited to ways of speaking and passing resolutions.

Our highest spiritual bodies are platforms for discussion.

The Jewish Welfare Board, which is so eminently a platform for discussion, has shown itself also highly efficient as an instrument for action.

We should avoid as much as possible the creation of new organizations.

We should work with those we have, and enlarge their scope to fit the new needs that have arisen.

Let the scope and the leadership of the Jewish Welfare Board be enlarged so that it become the instrument for the establishment of Jewish communities throughout the length and breadth of this land.

Let its first step in that direction be

the amalgamation of the synagogues, the schools and the centers.

The Making of Authentic Jews

In his analysis of the Jewish question, Jean-Paul Sartre holds up the French Jew as a horrible example of an inauthentic human being.

He defines an authentic being as one who assumes the responsibilities and risks of the situation in which fate places him. The inauthentic human being is one who denies that situation or attempts to escape from it.

The consequence of inauthenticity is a divided distraught, masochistic mind, living in a nightmarish Dahlistic kind of a world.

The inauthentic Jew always ends up by being the bitterest kind of anti-Semite.

* * *

That should be a warning to us American Jews.

Let us inscribe on the tablets of our hearts the friendly admonition of Sartre: "Authenticity for the Jew is to live to the full his condition as a Jew."

Let those who serve the synagogue, the center, and the school unite in the endeavor to create the conditions that are indispensable for the emergence of the authentic American Jew.

They are the Levites whose fitness for that undertaking depends upon inner purity from all dross of inauthenticity.

May they be the Levites to whom the Prophet Malachi referred when he said, "The Lord shall purify the sons of Levi, purging them like gold and silver, until he finds them to be men who will bring honest offerings."

THE PROHIBITION OF IMAGE WORSHIP

There is a story, that during the reign of the emporor Tiberius, people on a ship passing close to Epirus heard a mournful voice from one of the islands which bade the helmsman carry to another coast the tidings that great Pan had died. Men of all eras have heard tidings of the death of gods. But it was reserved for our era to have a philosopher feel called upon to announce that God himself had died. Whether or not we know it, what we really mean when we say that a god is dead is that the images of God vanish, and that therefore an image which up to now was regarded and worshipped as God, can no longer be so regarded and so worshipped. . . . The commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee an image," means at the same time, "Thou canst not make an image." This does not, of course, refer merely to sculptured or painted images, but to our fantasy, to all the power of our imagination as well. But man is forced time and again to make images, and forced to destroy them when he realizes that he has not succeeded.

The images topple, but the voice is never silenced. "Ye heard the voice of words but ye saw no form" (*Deut.* 4.12). The voice speaks in the guise of everything that happens, in the guise of all world events; it speaks to the men of all generations, makes demands upon them, and summons them to accept their responsibility.

Reprinted from *Israel and the World,* by Martin Buber through the courtesy of Schocken Books, Inc., New York City, copyright 1948, $3.75. From the essay, "The Prejudices of Youth."

Martin Buber–Zionist and Humanist

By MAX WIENER

MARTIN BUBER, the Jew and Zionist, is in the depth of his soul a humanist. His mind grasps and penetrates ideas that seem isolated and remote from the beaten path of contemporary thinking and discovers in them a universal significance. Only if we heed the peculiarity of this fusion of the particular and the universal in Buber's thinking can we gain insight into his attainments.

When, nearly fifty years ago, Buber established his reputation by making the Western World acquainted with the Hasidic spirit, the after-effect of the 19th century rationalism still held undiminished sway over the emancipated sector of Jewry. The liberals and, in almost equal measure, the Orthodox repudiated what seemed to them mere obscurantism, a superstition offensive to people of the third generation of "enlightenment." They did not like to be reminded of the narrowness of ghetto religion. Not only the beauty of Buber's style, his mastery of the German language, attracted and delighted educated readers—Christians as well as Jews—, but also his ability to unearth profound religious and moral truths from soil that had been neglected and even despised. That this wealth originated in the deep and fertile soil of a secluded people and that it revealed itself not in lofty, abstract ideas, but in the daily life of plain men, made it all the more precious for those who had become bored by the constant harping on Judaism as the "religion of reason."

Judaism then had to wrestle with a problem that is still with us: How to maintain the uniqueness of Judaism and at the same time to find in it a manifestation of the basically human, of a humanism not confined to the intellect, but pervading the entire personality. There is a decisive difference betwen a rationalistic universalism that overlooks the colorful variety of cultures, religions and nations and a universalism that values a differentiated mankind.

Buber is a Jewish leader who represents the latter kind of humanism. As a citizen of the world who was deeply convinced of the truth of Judaism and who felt keenly his responsibility for his people, he necessarily became a cultural Zionist. For, in contradistinction to the kind of Zionism which sees in the awakening Jewish nationalism nothing but a political movement designed to make the Jews a people like all others, *cultural* Zionism accorded recognition to the specific genius of the people and to the unique course of its history.

Eastern Haskalah, Hasidism and the influences of the European spirit are linked up in Buber's personality. Man is more than the product of his education and milieu. But Buber's interpretation of Judaism, religion and human nature is understandable only with reference to his Haskalah training and his Hasidic environment. Hasidism provided him with an all-encompassing wisdom, love, and feeling. Reason as embodied in the Jewish enlightenment added that critical discernment without which no responsible thinking is possible. Without participating in the universal spiritual life, a particular culture cannot exert any influence beyond its borders and, being debarred from foreign stimulation, may easily decline and even degenerate. Hasidism is, in a sense, a fuller religion than Rab-

binic Judaism. Buber, the historian of religion, exemplifies the way in which a true believer is enabled to do justice to faiths far different from his own, precisely because, in thought as well as in sentiment, he is so completely devoted to his own spiritual heritage and background. The piety of Rabbi Nahman and other Hasidic saints afforded him a clear insight into the religious consciousness of Christian ecstatics, nor could Chinese wisdom be excluded from the attention of his searching mind as it tracked the universally human wherever it manifested itself.

A Jew who examines the basis of his Judaism is compelled to clarify his attitude toward Christianity. The center of this discussion has always been the Messianic idea. Enlightened Judaism saw in Messianism the tendency of world history to social and political progress even if that progress required the extinction of the Jewish people. That was a strange interpretation of the ancient belief in Israel as the suffering servant of the Lord destined to bear the sins of others—an odd secularization of a religious concept. That Jewish individuals should survive and, stripped of their identity as a people, lead an untroubled life was never dreamt of by Jews in the pre-Emancipation era.

Here Buber, the Jewish nationalist and religious thinker, indicates the wide abyss which separates him from the adherents of the Christian Messiah, the Son of God, as well as from those many contemporary Jews who oversimplify the Messiah idea. The world in truth remains unredeemed. The Jew Jesus whom the Christians revere is indeed a venerable personality, and Buber does not hesitate to express his reverence for the greatness of that prophetic figure, but he is not the Messianic savior. Any moment in the course of history, the present era no less than the centuries gone by, shows how great is the need of salvation. And the Jewish people tormented and mutilated through the ages, but believing in its historic task as God's chosen servant, is the visible proof that the process of redemption is never finished.

In a time of extreme specialization, the many-sidedness of this man is really refreshing. This is evident not only in the variety of the objects his mind embraces but also and even more so in the manifold approaches to the topics with which he deals. In his treatment of the mythological and poetical world of Hasidism he displays his creative power both as a scholar and a poet. The translation of the Bible, which he undertook together with Franz Rosenzweig, belongs by its artistic form to the significant works of German literature, but it is no less a highly characteristic *Confessio Judaica.* Finally he is captivated by strictly philosophic and philological problems. The present article cannot embark on a discussion of his small book, "I and Thou," nor can it analyze his contributions to biblical research, such as his "Kingdom of God" and his recently published "Moses." Religious thinking, especially if it is based on the ideas and sentiments of a particular faith, needs to be controlled by sober systematic reflection, which must provide the solid foundations for its theological and philosophic structure. The works here mentioned are precisely those that lead to the core of Buber's personal philosophy. The "Kingdom of God" traces the sources of the Messianic belief to ancient biblical history. "I and Thou" seeks to clarify the main principles which underlie the ethical relations between man and man and thus establish the human personality. It is interesting to note how, again, the uni-

versally human and the specifically Jewish viewpoints meet in these historical and metaphysical efforts.

Ultimately, however, all his theorizing serves practical ends or, to put it more exactly, Buber, the practical Zionist, could find no better preparation for his activities in the movement than his own teachings. Before any other leader, he insisted on *Gegenwartsarbeit* (immediate work). He was unwilling to wait until the granting of a charter would give the Jews the legal authorization to colonize Eretz Yisrael and organize their political community. He was among the first to meet the requirement of Herzl's dictum that the return to Judaism must precede the return to the land of Israel. Though he may be a mystic, he has never let himself be guided by that mystical radicalism of which the catchword is "Everything or nothing," nor has he been persuaded that political success is the height of national happiness. The moral ideals he proclaims affect him too powerfully to let him see in political shrewdness or force—even if force were at the disposal of the Jews—an adequate means of achieving a commonwealth worthy of the desires and yearning of our people throughout the centuries. He has ever been an ardent fighter for peace, an advocate of a sincere friendship with the Arabs. Like the ancient Prophets he believes in peace for God's sake, in an honest policy as the right method for effecting good and noble purposes in public and communal life. Our youth is largely indebted to him for its spiritual reorientation in Judaism. He filled the idea of *halutziut* with such a clear content that his followers have devoted themselves enthusiastically to the new life. Having himself grown up in a generation which was consumed with a burning zeal to find a path that led back into Judaism, he inspired hope, confidence and faith in his disciples. It is hardly possible that a religious tradition once interrupted will be restored in its pristine form. However, a new and well-founded interpretation of that tradition may disclose hidden undercurrents which have the effect of a true revelation, if they satisfy present needs.

Buber's religious Zionism has had that effect. Since the end of the 19th century religious sentiment has yielded to national feeling among many who sought to orientate themselves in the world. This new belief tended more and more to become a ferocious group-selfishness that brushed aside all considerations of justice and fairness towards other groups. Inveterate anti-Semitism, in its racist form, gloried in chauvinistic excesses against us Jews. But the idea of nationalism at the same time proved to be most efficacious in bringing about a Jewish rebirth. It is extraordinarily difficult to draw a sharp line of demarcation between genuine love of one's own nation and brutal ruthlessness which pretends to be noble patriotism. Have all Jews always been immune to the contagious disease of chauvinism? There is no better teacher and guide to true and ethical nationalism than Martin Buber. In his philosophy of Judaism, the universal and the national tendencies are mutually supplementary. Cultural Zionism, pursuing the ways of the Jewish spirit, ultimately revitalizes Jewish religion. Thus this modern philosophy of Judaism, far from being alien to the inherited values, invests them with a new splendor.

My house is a decayed house
And the Jew squats on the window sill, the owner
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London
Gerontian: T. S. Eliot

STOKERS

By FRIEDA CLARK HYMAN

What passion stirred your juvenescence,
What beauty could your jaundiced heart discern?
Not sight nor smell, nor hearing, taste nor touch
Enlarge the youth, the man.
Tools are unrebellious slaves
By intent yoked and strapped to pulse,
To mine for man the fuel for sun
Or bank at least the seething hells of earth.

Or is the Jew no tenant of this world?
Like hesitant Von Kulp designed—
Like Madam of the darkened room—
Like Hakagawa or Silvero?

Did you who find him in some estaminet,
Seek him in another place?
At Mechili's broiling gate,
On the vanguard ship, defiant,
Armed with map and cutlass,
On the Templed heights,
On Masada and at Carenton,
On the Spanish Quemaderos,
Or girt by stokers spawned by you
In the fire-blackened abbatoirs?

From every man you asked the hat you wear,
The leather, bricks, the wood within your hearth.
But him alone you see upon your window sill
Squatting like a spidery thing.
He who trembled in the shadowed mount,
Absorbed theophanies you dare not probe,
(Or cataract with pride suspect),
Has birthed not one but herds. . . . Think:
These Tigers pouncing on your strawing brain are his,
All his.

Now think: this blistered flesh,
This patched and peeled by all your darling streets,
This heir to barbs your sickly mind has heaved,

Does not lament the tricks of history,
Is not assailed by terror of unbeing,
Of hemorrhagic impotence.
His tools so magnetized to steely quests
Were sharpened still by all your inquisitioned revelry.
Think: you helped him clarify his manhood and divinity.

Now think: ambition, vanity, time itself,
The language of aloneness,
Is foreign to the Jew:
For every purposed deed he draws
Upon a people's bank of faith,
And, yes, despite the barbs,
Can see with Amos-eyes
A world of decent men behind his unique family—
Can hear a Lessing though a thousand Eliots orate
And St. Bernards amid the noise of Cluny's Abbots.

Think too: his memories unsequenced and unbound
Distill the Tiger-Man.
Can disappointment's whine escape his lips—
His thoughts be trapped within an arid house—
Dispersed among the windy rocks?
Are not sight and smell and hearing, taste and touch
Uncounting slaves of heart?
And have these not Hosea-like
Obeyed him faithfully?
That over knife and flame and stone
His pulse beats on
With all mankind,
For all mankind.
And think: for pity's sake,
For you.

THE HISTORIC CLAIM TO ERETZ YISRAEL

We often hear the argument: there was a period in history when Britain was under Roman rule; does that give the Italians the right to claim England for themselves? Can the Arabs, who were once dominant in Spain, now claim Spain as their land? The answer is, of course, a categorical negative. But these cases cannot be compared with that of the Jews. Suppose that Spain had played the same role in the life of the Arabs as a nation throughout their history that Palestine has played in the life of the Jewish people; suppose that the Arabs were in the same need of a country as the Jewish pople is; suppose further that they could show that their entry into Spain would not be detrimental to the existing population; that the Spanish nation has vast undeveloped and under-populated territories at its disposal. Then the Arab claim to Spain would be irresistable indeed.

From *Covenant Everlasting,* by Berl Locker, Sharon Books, New York, N. Y. $1.50.

Toward A Rational Understanding of Jewish Mysticism

By EUGENE KOHN

THROUGH the literature of Torah there runs a mystical strain with which the modern reader is either totally unacquainted or which he is likely to dismiss as mere nonsense. Yet in the creation and study of this mystical tradition some of the leading personalities among our people were deeply absorbed, and there were times when that tradition profoundly influenced the course of Jewish history. The publication of a book that makes this literature intelligible to the modern mind is therefore a cultural event of first importance. Such a book is Gershon G. Sholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism.**

This article is designed to convey to the reader some of Sholem's insights into the meaning of Jewish mysticism. The book was not written merely for erudite scholars. It is intended to convey to the lay reader who is interested in the history of Judaism, the place that the mystical tradition has held in influencing Jewish life and thought, and the impact of historical events in determining the character of Jewish mysticism. That is a task which no previous Jewish historian has satisfactorily accomplished.

Sholem's Contribution to the Rewriting of Jewish History

It is easy to understand why the historic study of the mystical tradition has heretofore been neglected. Jewish historiography is a recent phenomenon. From Biblical times down to our own, there have appeared a number of narrative chronicles, but these are not history in the modern sense; they do not trace the course of events as an evolution revealing a causal sequence. That sort of history writing began during the Haskalah and was dominated by its rationalism. Men like Graetz, Zunz and Geiger, from whom most of us have received our conceptions of the Jewish past, were too much involved in emancipating their people from the obscurantism which so frequently finds a shelter in mysticism to be able to do justice to the mystical trends in their evaluation of Jewish life in past and present.

We might perhaps add that there is an almost inherent antagonism between the historical and the mystical outlook on life. A historian is, in the nature of things, somewhat of an empiricist. Without a profound respect for observable and verifiable data and without a certain skepticism about phenomena that are ineffable, inexplicable and incommunicable, it is almost impossible to write a credible history. But the mystic is always trying to express the ineffable, to explain the inexplicable and to impart the incommunicable.

The remarkable thing is that he frequently succeeds, though only with a limited number of people. For he cannot express himself in the accurate, incisive manner of the scientist or of the scholastic philosopher. He can speak only by analogy and in symbols, after the manner of the poets. To understand him one must have himself experienced something of the awe, the reverence, the wonder and ecstacy which can come with the contemplation of various aspects of the world's mystery.

* *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, by Gershon G. Sholem, with notes and Index xiv and 454 pp. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Schocken Books, New York, 1946. $5.50.

The great distinction of this book is that its author is in sympathy with the mystics in their rapturous contemplation of God's transcendence and exhilarating conviction of His immanence, without himself being a mystic. This enables him to see Jewish mysticism in a different perspective than that of the mystics themselves, on the one hand, or of the rationalistic historians and philosophic moralists on the other. He understands the psychological motivations of the mystic, and he understands as well how the expression of Jewish mysticism was conditioned by the general cultural heritage of Judaism and the environmental influences to which the mystics in different times and places were subject. The result is that his book explains many a phenomenon in Jewish history for which Jewish historians have heretofore had no adequate explanation.

Here are a few of the puzzles that are typical of many which his keen insights into Jewish mysticism enable us to understand: How could some of the best minds in Judaism who were familiar with the rationalistic attacks of Maimonides on the ascription of anthropomorphic attributes to God still be interested in such a book as the *Shiyur Komah,* which professes to assign dimensions to God? How could a legalist like Joseph Karo, the author of the *Shulhan Aruk,* be, at the same time, a devotee of mysticism? How could Shabbatai Zevi, who believed himself to be the Messiah, accept conversion to Mohammedanism, and his disciple, Jacob Frank, conversion to Catholicism, and how could they still retain the loyalty of great numbers of their followers? How is it that two such contrasting movements as Reform and Hasidism had, in common, an opposition to Zionism? All these apparent paradoxes lose their paradoxical character under the penetrating analysis of Professor Sholem.

The Psychological Foundations of Mysticism

Before examining some of Sholem's significant explanations of the historic conditioning of Jewish mysticism, it is important for us to understand something of the psychology of mysticism. When we push our inquiry into the nature of things to its ultimate limits, we are always confronted with a mystery and find ourselves involved in paradoxes. Our minds cannot grasp infinity but cannot conceive of space as finite. How an infinite universe can engender finite beings remains a paradox from age to age. Practical-minded people may admonish us that it is idle to inquire into what preceded the creation of the world or what lies beyond the data of our senses in space or time, but the human mind sometimes refuses to stop wondering. Where empirical reasoning fails, imagination tries to fill in the gap with analogies and symbols. Men feel their dependence on the Superhuman and feel that somehow they are responsible to a supreme Source of authority beyond their own will for what they make of their lives. That Supreme Being is so transcendent that they cannot presume to grasp all His purposes. Yet their sense of responsibility is so poignant that they must believe that He has revealed something of His purpose in their own spiritual insights, that He is immanent as well as transcendent. Out of this mystery of the transcendence and immanence of God arises the further paradox of freedom and determinism. Every human being feels that he is an initiating center of creative energy, an autonomous, self-contained entity, separate and distinct from every other being on earth. And yet every man is the product of heredity and environment; his thinking, his feeling and his action are all determined by a biological succession that goes back beyond the beginnings of history and, indeed, of the

human race, and by the specific culture into which he was born. He thus seems to himself to be subserving a destiny of which, at best, he can get only a glimpse. Are men whole or are they fragments? Is our life our own, or is that a mere illusion and are our destinies laid down for us? If so, are we fulfilling a doom or a promise?

Questions like these we can neither answer nor give up asking. We cannot solve the paradoxes, but we seek to resolve them for ourselves by stating them in ways that afford us the greatest satisfaction in contemplation and action. The matter-of-fact among us dismiss them from their minds, but the more imaginative find in their contemplation a deep and abiding satisfaction. For life lived only on the level of the material and practical makes of man but another animal and of the animal a mere mechanical organism. But the moment we think of life in relation to spiritual values, all these questions and paradoxes come flowing in upon us, and the more we immerse ourselves in them, the more do we feel the dignity and sanctity of human life and the security which comes from believing that we have a determined place in the scheme of things.

That is why there will always be mystics. Certainly no religion can ever completely eliminate the mystical strain. If ethics stresses the volitional aspect of religion, and theology the intellectual aspect, mysticism stresses the emotional, the desire to feel ourselves at one with the mysterious Power on which our life depends, to feel that we are upheld "by the everlasting arms" and that our purposes have a significant relation to the evolutionary trend of life in general, making us "partners with the Holy One blessed be He in the work of creation."

Mysticism is thus a permanent aspect of religion. But there are times and conditions when mysticism dominates a religious culture, and there are times when it is more or less thrust into the background by rationalistic theology or religious legalism. These three aspects of religion, like the three faculties of the human mind—thinking, feeling and willing—are never completely separate from one another; each implies and, to a degree, depends on the other. But with certain persons and in specific situations one or another is likely to dominate.

Thus, in primitive religion, in which all natural phenomena seem to be the expression of a personal will, and every natural object to be the abode of a god, demon or spirit, there is little room for mysticism. There is here no challenging division between the natural and the supernatural, the infinite and the finite, the One and the many, the subject and the object.

The Mysticism of the Divine Chariot, Throne and Palace

Mysticism begins with monotheism and the universalization of the God idea. But monotheism and the universalization of the God idea were difficult to grasp and set religious people wondering—wondering and dreaming. They had long been accustomed to the idea that God was the true King of Israel, that He gave the people its law, that He rewarded fidelity and jealously punished the infidelity of idol worship. They thought of Him as residing in the Temple, an invisible Presence enthroned on the Cherubim, the symbolic representation of the storm cloud. Or they thought of Him as actually riding the storm cloud. But when the Temple was destroyed, or when its destruction was imminent, and when the Prophets taught that the God of Israel was the God of all mankind, the question of how He exercised His royal sway began to agitate the mind and heart. Ezekiel's vision of the *Merkabah,* the

Divine Chariot, came in response to that brooding wonder about how God, who had previously manifested Himself in the Temple at Jerusalem, could assert His sway even over Babylon. Imagination saw in the storm cloud heavenly beings that conveyed God at will wherever He wanted to manifest Himself in order to assert His rule.

For centuries after Ezekiel's time, his description of the Divine Chariot became the subject of special study by men who wanted to recapture his ecstatic vision of the throne of God, who felt the need of experiencing in concrete imagery God's majesty and sovereignty. The imagery of their recorded visions was largely derived from what they saw of the pomp of royal and imperial courts. A hierarchy of angels and ministering spirits fulfilled, in that Divine Court somewhere in heaven, the functions of the various ranks and degrees of nobility that mediated between the common subject and the emperor.

The earliest form of mysticism was thus the effort of certain religious groups to induce in themselves and to describe the visions of the heavenly throne, the heavenly palaces and the heavenly hosts by which God governed the world. Since these groups of mystics were Jewish and, like their fellow Jews who were not mystics, believed in the revelation of the Torah and the chosenness and cosmic importance of Israel, these concepts are reflected in their mystical visions.

Medieval German Hasidism— Emphasis on God's Immanence

The Merkabah mysticism answered the mystics' need for experiencing the transcendence of God, which the uniqueness of monotheistic faith, in its reaction against pagan polytheism, naturally emphasized. But, in the course of time, certain mystics began to experience a nostalgia for something which the pagan had enjoyed and the "throne mysticism" did not afford. They wanted to find that the realm of the human and the divine were not so completely sundered as to make it impossible for men to meet with God in this very mundane sphere of existence. The mere study of the Torah and conformity with the *mitzvot,* which was the characteristic form of Jewish piety, did not seem sufficient for that intimate communion with God to which they aspired. In Medieval Germany there therefore developed a different kind of mysticism which stressed the immanence rather than the transcendence of God. Its devotees were known as Hasidim, but their doctrine must not be confused with that of the Hasidic movement in Eastern Europe which was at its height in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although the two doctrines had a good deal more than their name in common.

German medieval Hasidism was, of course, rooted in the traditional forms of Jewish piety, but it was also influenced by the medieval German environment. In that environment asceticism and renunciation of worldly interests played a conspicuous role. So, too, did demonology and magic. The mysticism of Jehudah the Hasid and Eliezer of Worms reflects these preoccupations. To the modern reader, there may seem to be no connection between the writing of amulets to ward off evil spirits and the mystic faith in the immanence of God. Nevertheless there is a connection, if we penetrate more imaginatively into the culture of the period. It was then common belief that piety and the invocation of the potencies deemed to inhere in the words and letters of scriptural texts, particularly the letters of the name of God, could invest a man with supernatural power. Did not God, too, create the world by His words? That belief is thoroughly in

keeping with the idea that God operates through human beings, that the human soul is a "spark" of the divine.

The Attempt to Reconcile God's Immanence and Transcendence

In the subsequent mystical movements that Sholem traces we find an effort to synthesize and resolve the parodox of the transcendence and immanence of God. Among the Spanish and Portugense Jewish mystics, both in the prophetic mysticism of Abulafia and his disciples and in the exegetic and theosophic mysticism of the Zohar and its interpreters, the Kabbalists, the problem is that of reconciling the infinity of God with his manifestations to human beings in a world of space and time, and finite objects and events. The rationalistic theology of Maimonides and his disciples had taught thinking Jews to deny to God not only all corporeal attributes but even all personal traits. For to conceive of God as limited by positive attributes was to deny His unity. Only negative attributes telling what He is not can be ascribed to Him by man with any degree of truth. The essential nature of God is thus hidden from man. He is the *En Sof,* the Infinite, or, as He is sometimes designated in mystic lore, the *Ayin,* the Non-entity which is nevertheless the Source of all that exists.

This philosophical conception of God was as far removed from the popular notions of the ordinary Jew in those days as the idea of one universal God had been from those of the ordinary Jew in the days of the Prophets. To deny to God corporeal attributes was one thing, but to deny to Him the personal traits which generations of Jews had maintained as the standard for the pious to imitate in order to be godly, was another. After all, even Maimonides and the rationalists believed that God had created the world and had revealed the Torah to Israel. How could the Infinite, the Supreme Negation of finite being, create this material world in which we live and the transient and imperfect beings that we are, and how could He reveal to us the way of salvation?

Where rationalist metaphysics stopped, the mystical yearning for experiencing the reality of God could not stop. The winged imagination had to explore the regions into which a pedestrian logic could not follow. But the imagination must not contradict the conclusions of the accepted Aristotelian metaphysics expounded by men like Maimonides. The thought of God creating the universe literally by the utterance of words, or even by the exercise of a personal will was no longer tenable. Not that the truth of the creation story was challenged, but it was felt to be in need of reinterpretation, as indeed, was the whole of the Torah narrative. Instead of a literal belief in creation, these mystics assumed that the world proceeded from God by a series of emanations or derivations, each growing out of the preceding but drawing ultimately from the hidden, incomprehensible God. All the theophanies of the Bible, all the concrete manifestations of God in human life, were ascribed not to the personal Will of the supremely transcendent Power, but to an emanation from Him. Thus the *Shekinah* is conceived as an emanation from God. These emanations did not partake of God's infinity. In this way, the mystics were able not only to read sense into the Biblical texts but even into the imaginative imagery of the Throne and Palace mysticism.

The Problem of Evil in the Kabbala

The imagery of the *sefirot* or emanations was also used to account for the existence of evil. The act of creation was conceived as a shrinking of the Infinite

into successively lesser finite spheres. In this process something of the Divine was necessarily lost, sunk, as it were, into the abyss of the uncreated. It was the function of the saint, by acts of piety and by mystical contemplation, to raise these fallen sparks of divinity and thus to redeem man and nature. In this way, this brooding over the transcendence of God had to take cognizance also of His immanence. Not only was man dependent on God, but God was dependent on Man to restore the divine nature of things which had somehow been lost in the process by which the Infinite became embodied in finite forms.

Redemption and the Mystical Conception of the Messiah

This process of redemption was, as we should expect, closely related to the traditional Messianic hopes of the Jewish people and their belief in the world to come, of which the present world was to serve as the ante-chamber. Particularly after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, when the yearning for a world redeemed from persecution and unmerited suffering became very strong, this attempt to hasten the coming of the divine redemption of Israel and mankind became very intense. That the practice of all the precepts of Jewish law was a prerequisite to that communion with God which was redemptive no Jew questioned. That is the answer to the apparent paradox of the legalism of such a mystic as R. Joseph Karo. He was a member of the Safed "Community of Saints and Mystics," * who were moved to settle in Eretz Yisrael because the study and practice of Torah in the Holy Land was deemed a means toward the redemption of Israel and the world.

The mystics of that day took very seriously the poetic *aggadah* which declared that from the time that the Temple was destroyed and Israel went into exile, the Divine Presence was also exiled from its heavenly abode. They associated this exile of the *Shekinah* with that loss of perfection which was involved in the successive emanations from God, each of which necessitated a shrinking (*tzimtzum*) of the preceding emanation, and a breakage of the "vessel" that had previously contained the Divine Spirit. Israel's exile they regarded not merely or primarily as a punishment, but rather as a penance, as a vicarious atonement by virtue of which evil would be overcome and the "broken vessels" of Divinity be restored.

One of the most significant insights of Sholem into the historic conditioning of the Jewish mystical tradition at this point, is his perception of the relation of this theory of *galut* as a method of *tikkun* or cosmic redemption to the experience of the Marranos who had returned to Judaism. Their having previously lived publicly as professing Christians had given them a deep guilt-consciousness, from which they sought escape by rationalizing the mental anguish of their previous double life, ostensibly Christian but at heart Jewish. They wished to view that anguish as a penance, a part of the divine scheme for the redemption of man and nature. They suffered together with the *Shekinah,* in order that the world might be restored to the perfection that preceded its fall from grace.

In the light of this need, the author also explains the religious fervor which was behind the Messianic movement centering in Shabbatai Zevi as the long-awaited Messiah. When the movement reached dimensions sufficient to bring it to the serious attention of the Turkish Sultan, and Shabbatai Zevi was given

* See the essay under that title by Solomon Schechter in his *Studies in Judaism,* series 2.

the choice of death or conversion to Mohammedanism, the same sort of reasoning made it possible for many of his disciples, and perhaps for Shabbatai Zevi himself, to regard his enforced apostasy, as another form of "exile," as though, in a mysterious way, it constituted an act of *tikkun,* an efficacious penance suffered by the Messiah to speed the redemption of the world.

Results of Dissillusionment with Mystical Messianism

To be sure, this rationalization was too much for most of Shabbatai Zevi's followers to swallow. It led many to a reaction against mysticism and a return to rationalism, or even to a destructive skepticism. The fiasco of the Sabbatian movement played an important part in giving impetus to the *Haskalah* on the one hand, and to the concentration on *halakah* of East European Jews, on the other. But the mood of expectancy of a redeemed world order could not lightly be shaken off. It led many to see signs of such a redemption in the emancipation of Jews in Western lands from medieval restrictions. Disillusioned in the hope for a personal Messiah, they substituted the hope for a messianic era of universal brotherhood and seized pathetically on every improvement in Judeo-Gentile relations as evidence of a millenial future for mankind. The influence of that mood on the origination of Reform Judaism is pointed out, probably for the first time, in Sholem's book.

Disillusioned with mystical Messianism on the one hand and with Western emancipation on the other, a great section of Eastern European Jewry began seeing signs of redemption in the spread of democratic nationalism and found in Zionism an appropriate modern expression of the hope of redemption, purged now, from those mystical doctrines that encouraged reliance on a single, fallible human being as the source of salvation.

Reform and Zionism are not mystical phenomena, but the mystical tradition did not perish. Indeed, it burgeoned anew for several generations in the form of Hasidism. This Hasidism avoided the pitfall of making a Messiah of its founder and leader, Israel Baal Shem, although he was not uninfluenced by the literature of the Sabbatian movement, but continued to stress the efficacy of the saintly personality in redeeming the *Shekinah* and ultimately Israel and mankind. These circumstances explain both the role of the *tzadik* (saint) in Hasidism and the common opposition of Reform and Hasidism to the Zionist movement.

Has Jewish Mysticism a Future?

The Jewish mystical tradition has apparently not recovered from the blow dealt it by the disappointment with Shabbatai Zevi. There has been no great mystical movement in Jewish life since the rise of Hasidism, which is today in its decline, although it has left its impress on many of the best products of the Jewish cultural renascence. The Hasidism of a man like Rabbi Kuk or like Martin Buber reveals the influence of an earlier mysticism, but mysticism is clearly not prominent in the main current of Jewish life and thought today.

To some, it may appear to be dying. But we doubt whether it will die. When Jewish popular thinking will have caught up with the changed conception of the universe revealed by modern science, the Jewish spirit, seeking to free itself from bondage to mechanism or to the instinctual drives behind nationalist self-assertion, will again ponder on the ultimate mysteries of life. It will again seek to express in new symbols relevant to contemporary experience the eternal paradox of the transcendence and the immanence of God, of His unity and the diveristy of

His creations, of the integrity and solitariness of the human personality on the one hand and its fragmentation and its integration in the life of society and of nature on the other. As long as finite man inhabits an infinite universe, mysticism will remain. Certainly, the mystical feeling plays too important a role in the Jewish tradition ever to be totally eliminated from Jewish civilization.

Random Thoughts

Winston Churchill in his book, *The Gathering Storm,* tells us why he preferred to become the Lord Admiral of the Navy to being a minister without portfolio.

"It is easier," he says, "to give directions than advice, and more agreeable to have a right to act even in a limited sphere than the privilege to talk at large."

That in a nutshell, explains why Jews prefer having a State of Israel to being roving missionaries.

* * *

Religion is like the windshield of an automobile.

When we pass through a rainstorm of trying experience, it is important to keep the shield wiper of common sense working. Otherwise religion will only shut out the view ahead.

* * *

When somebody sets a dish down on a table you can tell whether the dish is cracked or not.

So can people tell whether your character is whole or cracked.

* * *

A progressive idea or reform is like a wedge.

It may be used to lift up or to split apart.

* * *

Adobe bricks that were dried and baked two hundred years ago were found to contain seeds of plants.

When the bricks were broken up and soaked in water the seeds began to sprout again.

Should we doubt then that with the breaking up of the two thousand years old *Galut,* the seeds of Israel's creativity are again coming to life?

* * *

Freedom without opportunity is like appetite without food.

Opportunity without freedom is like food without appetite.

* * *

Democracy emphasizes what men are and have in common.

That is why it clashes with any vested interest which divides men.

* * *

For the good of Israel in Eretz Yisrael the traditionalists should learn that whether you are an individual or a nation, "you can't go home again."

* * *

It is incomparably easier to venerate the truth than to speak it, to admire righteousness than to practice it, to worship God than to obey him.

* * *

Judaism never has been, and is least of all nowadays, a resting place for tired minds and tired radicals.

* * *

Moral delinquency of the Romans drew from Juvenal the same kind of invective and satire as that of the Jews drew from Isaiah.

But Isaiah spoke as God's messenger, and the Jews treated his written words as sacred scripture.

That points to the essential difference between Roman religion and Jewish religion.

M. M. K.